## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:


Claims 1-26 (Canceled).


Claim 27 (Currently Amended): A video decoding method of decoding motion compensated prediction inter-frame encoded data by referring to a plurality of reference frames for each macroblock, comprising:

receiving encoded motion vector data, encoded predictive mode information, and an encoded prediction error signal;

selecting, in accordance with the motion vector data and the predictive mode information, one from (a) generation of a predictive macroblock from a specific reference frame of the plurality of reference frames, (b) generation of a plurality of macroblocks from the plurality of reference frames so as to generate an average value of the plurality of reference frames as a predictive macroblock, or (c) generation of a predictive macroblock by a linear extrapolation prediction or linear interpolation prediction; and

generating a decoded frame by adding the generated predictive macroblock and the predictive error signal,

wherein the received predictive mode information includes [[a]] first [[flag]] data indicating a single prediction using the specific reference frame or a composite prediction using a plurality of reference frames and [[a]] second [[flag]] data indicating whether the composite prediction is a prediction based on an average value of a plurality of reference macroblocks or the linear extrapolation prediction or linear interpolation prediction, the second [[flag]] data being received as header data of an encoded frame or part of header data of a plurality of encoded frames.

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Claim 28 (Currently Amended): A video decoding apparatus of decoding motion compensated prediction inter-frame encoded data by referring to a plurality of reference frames for each macroblock, comprising:

an input unit configured to receive encoded motion vector data, encoded predictive mode information, and an encoded prediction error signal;

a selector to select, in accordance with the motion vector data and the predictive mode information, one from (a) generation of a predictive macroblock from a specific reference frame of the plurality of reference frames, (b) generation of a plurality of macroblocks from the plurality of reference frames so as to generate an average value of the plurality of reference frames as a predictive macroblock, or (c) generation of a predictive macroblock by a linear extrapolation prediction or linear interpolation prediction; and

a generator to generate a decoded frame by adding the generated predictive macroblock and the predictive error signal,

wherein the received predictive mode information includes [[a]] first [[flag]] data indicating a single prediction using the specific reference frame or a composite prediction using a plurality of reference frames and [[a]] second [[flag]] data indicating whether the composite prediction is a prediction based on an average value of a plurality of reference macroblocks or the linear extrapolation prediction or linear interpolation prediction, the second [[flag]] data being received as header data of an encoded frame or part of header data of a plurality of encoded frames.